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Title: Need to check smuggling of cardamom from neighbouring countries.

SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMATHITTA): I draw the attention of the Government towards the plight of cardamom growers whose condition is grim due to falling prices of cardamom. Free flow of Guatemalan cardamom is the major cause behind the declining prices of cardamom in domestic market. It is to be noted that the prices of cardamom during the period from June 2012 to January 2013 were ranging between Rs.700 and 800 per kg. However, prices touched the lowest rate of Rs. 500 per kg over the past few weeks. According to the Spices Board, import of cardamom during the last nine months has been 200 tonnes. It is a moderate rate. But what is alarming is the illicit trafficking of cardamom in bulk quantities into the country via Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. Both the Government and the farmers are losing due to this illegal activity. In addition to declining prices, cardamom farmers have also been affected by crop failure for the last two years. There has been 40 per cent reduction in production of cardamom due to severe drought in last year. Therefore, I request the Government to take urgent action to stop the smuggling of cardamom from neighbouring countries.